Organizational Communications Plan for the Student Financial Assistance Headquarters

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY

The purpose of this communication plan is to serve as a guide for the Communication Integrated Product Team (IPT) in developing communication products that are synchronized with the appropriate technical development phase. A secondary purpose of this plan is to serve as a high level resource for information about Record Management Systems (RMS).

To accommodate these two purposes, it is necessary to organize this communication plan as a hybrid of a traditional communication plan, change management plan, and project plan. This arrangement allows the Communication IPT to address the dual purposes listed above and provides the flexibility to meet future changes to this document.

This document is a living document and sections and schedules used in the communication plan will be revised to represent current information, decisions, and guidance from the Student Financial Assistance (SFA) organization. The sections identified in this document are not chronologically organized. Each section has been developed to be a discrete section and stand on its own merits.

A summary of each section follows that allows the reader to find the section they need without reading through the entire document.

Section 1 provides an overall assessment of the SFA organization with respect to an RMS solution. This section reviews the current situation at SFA, to include goals and objectives of SFA. In addition, this section discusses the current business process and technical structure that supports current document management processes at SFA.

Section 2 discusses market drivers and trends that influence an organization to undertake a document management solution. Drivers and trends are looked at using both the public and private sector examples.

Section 3 reviews the benefits and risks of an RMS-type solution. Benefits are discussed in terms of high level organizational benefits and end-user benefits. The risks identified in this section are high level risks that most typical organizations face when implementing an RMS solution. Risks unique to SFA are identified in the SFA's risk management plan and are not discussed in this section.

Section 4 provides a description of the end state of the proposed RMS solution. This description provides the organization with a clear picture of how things will be in the future. The end state helps identify what will change and will not change within the SFA organization.

Section 5 provides a road map to move SFA from its current state to the end state. This section looks at items such as organizational sponsorship, end-user training, feedback mechanisms, and key

implementation factors. In this section, organizational sponsors are identified and end-user training is discussed.

Section 6 profiles end users that are affected by an RMS solution. This will help to develop communication messages by identifying those affected and how they will interact with the system.

Section 7 identifies the communication products and activities by development phase. This section helps the Communication IPT to craft appropriate products in a timely manner.

1. PRESENT STATE OF OPERATIONS

1.1 Current Situation

The Department of Education's (DOEd) office of Student Financial Assistance (SFA) is currently in transition from a paper intensive, low technology method of managing corporate documents to one that is more automated and relies on a Record Management System (RMS). SFA seeks an RMS solution that is low risk, consistent with the current business model, and has the capability to interface with an enterprise-wide document repository. This solution will manage the storage of paper documents received in, or generated by, the SFA Headquarters (HQ) in Washington, DC.

The proposed RMS solution will address the following goals and objectives of SFA:

Goals:

- Eliminate the dependency on paper documents.
- Improve the efficiency of SFA operations.
- Improve accessibility to SFA information.
- Improve SFA personnel job satisfaction.

Objectives:

- Minimize the amount of paper to be moved to the new building.
- Reduce the future collection of paper by implementing an electronic filing process.
- Increase efficiency by providing effective and efficient search and retrieval tools.
- Allow SFA to manage documents according to established retention policies.
- Improve internal/external access to SFA documents to improve job performance and customer service satisfaction.
- Minimize the use of paper transactions and documents.

A major time constraint impacting this project is the relocation of SFA HQ to a new facility scheduled for August 1, 2001. The SFA HQ does not want to transport and store the vast amount of paper records from the existing facility to the new location.

1.2 Business Process

High-level business processes will be identified in the Requirements Definition phase.

Appendix A, Acronyms, contains a list of acronyms used in this document.

1.3 Technical Support

Technical support for the SFA HQ will be identified in the Requirements Definition Phase.

2. MARKET DRIVERS AND TRENDS

2.1 Drivers

Public and private sector organizations are under intense pressure to become more responsible to their respective constituencies. In the private sector, shareholders are demanding greater returns on investment. Likewise, taxpayers are demanding that government agencies become more efficient and cost effective. Both shareholders and taxpayers want to see tangible results.

The private sector has responded to shareholder concerns in various ways, primarily through restructuring their labor force and by automating business processes. By contrast, Federal, state, and local governments have responded by enacting legislation to encourage various bureaucratic agencies to become more efficient and lean.

The Executive Office of the President and the U.S. Congress have taken the lead on reform by enacting the Government Performance Results Act (GPRA) of 1993, the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, and the National Performance Review (NPR). These reforms are intended to empower and encourage Federal agencies to become more efficient, effective, and performance oriented.

One common measure of success in achieving the goals of more effective and efficient organizations is the reduction of operating costs. As budget analysts in the private and public sector look at their respective budgets, it has become abundantly clear that there are line items within the budget that can be reduced. One of these items is the use of paper and its related costs.

Paper is the lifeblood of any organization. It is the predominant media used to communicate and transmit messages both inside and outside an organization. However, private and public sector organizations are awash in paper. Current estimates indicate that the sum total of paper documents on file within the United States exceeds 318 billion pieces. Every year, it is projected that 92 billion new pieces will be added to this pile. But the use and storage of this medium comes with a premium cost. To put things into perspective, consider the following statistics.

Current research estimates that U.S. companies will spend the following:

- $ 6 billion per year on pre-printed forms
- $ 2 billion per year to dispose of paper
- $ 94-120 billion per year to distribute, store, and process forms

Clearly, the volume of paper and the associated costs of using paper as a primary means of communication are staggering. Statistics such as these have influenced public and private sector decision-makers to seek solutions to this potentially overwhelming and complex problem.

2.2 Trends

Future organizations are likely to be streamlined, geographically disbursed, and highly dependent on information that is digitized and stored in an electronic repository. An implication of this trend is that organizations will have the ability to use some combination of workflow management, RMS, or Electronic Document Management (EDM).

Many private sector companies and various government agencies have already moved to some form of automated system to manage their corporate documents. The early returns on using automation to manage documents are encouraging.

2.2.1 Private Sector

As mentioned previously, the private sector is under pressure to increase profits for shareholders. Corporate executives have taken a hard look at the costs of managing and maintaining the paper flow within their respective organizations. While the approaches to automating document management have varied, the emphasis is not only on cost reduction, but also on the improvement of customer service.

Two private sector companies illustrate this point. One company is Sears, the national retailer. Their implementation of an automated document management system has greatly improved customer service within their facility-planning department, while reducing some of the larger operating costs associated with document management and storage. The second company is the well-respected insurance company, USAA, which illustrates one of the more widely acclaimed and documented success stories in the use of automated document management. Through a combination of imaging and workflow improvements, USAA saved millions of dollars in operating costs, while improving customer service. Prior to automating their document management system, USAA required 39,000 square feet of warehouse storage space for their active business files. Inactive files required warehouse space to store 80,000 boxes. As a result of automated document management, USAA's total storage requirement has been reduced to 100 square feet.

2.2.2 Public Sector

The public sector is also moving quickly towards automated document management. Through the use of automation, various levels of government have been able to achieve more effective and efficient government processes and improve customer service. The following is a list of some of the more notable successes in the public sector:

Federal Government:

- Department of Defense
- Environmental Protection Agency National Records Management Program

- Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
- Smithsonian Institute Archives
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Office of Thrift Supervision
- Central Intelligence Agency
- Bureau of Census Records Program
- Farm Credit Administration Records Management Program
- Office of Government Ethics Records Management Program

State:

- Massachusetts Department of Revenue
- West Virginia Department of Highways

City (Large)—New York City Office of Comptroller (Claims Processing)

County (Large)—Maricopa County (AZ) Recorders Office (includes metro Phoenix, one of the largest and fastest growing counties in United States)

The above organizations provide diverse examples of private and public sector organizations that are moving from a paper-intensive environment to one that is digitized and uses a document management system. As organizations undertake an RMS solution, they should be aware of the associated high level benefits and risks.

3. BENEFITS AND RISKS OF AN RMS SOLUTION

Organizations should carefully consider the benefits and risks of implementing an RMS-type solution. The benefits and risks should be addressed in the planning and communication process. With respect to planning, the benefits and risks should be weighed carefully to ensure that benefits exceed costs and that associated risks have an appropriate mitigation plan. The results of examining benefits and risks should be communicated to the appropriate decision-makers and staff within SFA. High level benefits and risks are discussed in subsequent sections.

3.1 High Level Benefits

Implementation of an RMS-type solution assists organizations to better manage documents and utilize corporate information. In addition, an RMS can help organizations reduce operating costs by reducing the space needed to store paper documents and records. Some of the high level benefits of an RMS are as follows.

Provides superior document management:

- Control the creation and growth of records.
- Manage and disseminate dynamic information with power and flexibility.
- Manage and distribute documents with single application simplicity.
- Ensure the latest information is consistently available to the decision-maker and provides better support for management decision-making.

Allows organizations to leverage organizational memory:

- Access and analyze organizational memory to improve productivity and performance.
- Share business-critical information with authorized users across the enterprise.
- Provide access to valuable corporate knowledge that is often hidden in organizational documents and filing systems.

Robustly supports retention control policies and programs:

- Documents that should be destroyed will be destroyed with a Record Management Application (RMA) software in place that ensures that formal retention and disposition is carried out.
- Without an RMA software, potentially litigious documents may remain on systems.
- Management of holdings is more defensible in court, because the process of managing documents is reliably and consistently applied.

Provides opportunities to reduce operation costs:

- Storage of documents and records is greatly reduced.
- Duplication of paperwork is minimized.
- Mailing costs are reduced when electronic forms and documents are accessed through the intranet/internet.

Increases reliability—With an RMS and optical storage, the physical destruction of documentation is minimized when compared to the storage of paper using traditional methods. In addition, disaster recovery is more manageable and affordable.

3.2 End-User Benefits

When a technology solution is introduced into a business process, end users often wonder how the new solution will benefit them. This is not uncommon in organizations that experience rapid transformation from lumbering bureaucracies to ones that are more streamlined and efficient.

An RMS offers several significant benefits that will not only help end users perform their jobs more efficiently, but will also improve overall customer service in the following areas:

- **Improved Information Retrieval**—Users can query and retrieve records using a wider range of criteria than the traditional paper system such as document content, date filed, who/when filed, etc., which results in faster retrieval time and improved results (more documents).

- **Increased Reliability—**With an RMS in place, there is a significantly reduced possibility of loss of valuable corporate records in electronic form as a result of either malicious loss, accidental loss, or technical failure.
- **Richer Repository—**Access to the official records of other users creates a richer pool of useful material that is relevant, less ambiguous, and more readily accessible than ever before.

3.3 High Level Risks

The Gartner Group surveyed 200 Information Technology (IT) executives on the risks of implementing an RMS-type solution within an organization. The comments expressed by the IT executives concerning some of the high level risks are as follows:

- The first risk is an inadequate infrastructure for the physical management of digital documents. Desktop hard drives and floppy disks are not viable storage platforms for corporate information assets.
- The second risk is the management of access to documents. An inadequate RMS may make it impossible to catalog and preserve digital documents for re-use. This limitation can fuel growth of application-specific repositories ("islands of information"). Conversely, wide-open access to network file systems may not provide useable query or control services. The user can easily become overwhelmed with the system's inability to narrow queries to a useful set of results.
- The third risk is the costs and benefits of a manual versus automated document management system. Organizations must carefully weigh the costs and benefits of implementing an RMS solution. This analysis should include the consideration of all-tangible and intangible benefits, as well as hidden costs associated with the development and implementation of an RMS.
- Lastly, the fourth risk is the replacement of paper with an electronic equivalent will not yield long lasting results unless traditional work processes and practices are properly redesigned or reengineered. Many times organizations want to jump into the development phase without carefully gathering requirements and weighing competing alternative solutions.

4. END STATE OF THE RMS SOLUTION

4.1 Clear Vision Of The "To Be" State

This section describes the desired end state of the RMS solution and will be completed after the RMS solution is selected.

4.2 What Will Change

This section describes changes in the organization related to the technical system and business processes, and will be completed after the RMS solution is selected.

4.3 What Will Not Change

This section describes areas of the technical system and business processes that will not be affected, and will be completed after the RMS solution is selected.

5. HOW WE GET THERE FROM HERE

Good communication planning requires organizations to identify sponsors or champions of a proposed change. Sponsors of the change should have a plan to educate and train end users, provide feedback mechanisms for management and employees, and identify key success factors. Sponsors should also develop a clear and concise road map of how the organization will move from its present state to its end state.

5.1 SFA Sponsors

For change to be successful, it must first be embraced and sponsored by management. If properly sponsored and supported by management, then the employees will be more likely to accept and adapt to the change. Within the SFA, the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) has taken the lead on implementing a low-risk, commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) interface with a document management system. Both the CFO and the SFA leadership agree on this course of action and have embraced the idea of integrating with an enterprise document management system.

SFA senior leadership includes the following:

- Jim Lynch (Chief Financial Officer; project sponsor)
- Greg Woods (Chief Operating Officer)
- Candy Kane (Chief of Staff for Chief Operating Officer)
- Jennifer Douglas (Acting General Manager [GM] for Students) and Mary K. Muncie (Chief of Staff for Students)
- Kay Jacks (GM for Schools) and Jeannette Zink (Chief of Staff for Schools)
- John Reeves (GM for Financial Partners)
- Steve Hawald (Chief Information Officer)
- Debra Wiley (Ombudsman)
- Candace Hardesty (Director, Contracts and Acquisitions)
- Calvin Thomas (Director, Human Resources)
- Karen Freeman (Communications)
- Anne Teresa (SFA University)

In addition to identifying sponsors of change, it is important for an organization to develop communication teams to help coordinate and disseminate relevant information to employees and to internal and external stakeholders. The following is how SFA is structured to communicate information concerning the development of an RMS solution.

Overall Communications—Cheryl Queen is the SFA lead of the Integrated Project Team (IPT) that has been assembled to support the RMS system. Ms. Queen provides overall direction for all IPT team members. Monica Woods is the communications lead for the IPT. Other members are noted in the IPT Charter.

Internal Communications—Lisa Cain is responsible for all SFA internal communications. The IPT communications team works closely with Ms. Cain on all communications efforts, products, and vehicles. Candy Kane and Karen Freeman approve internal communications messages, as needed.

External Communications—Joe Aiello is responsible for all SFA external communications. Mr. Aiello, with input from Ms. Cain and the internal communications team, develops messages for release to the higher education community and the press, when appropriate.

5.2 Educating And Training The End User

All employees will need training on the implemented RMS solution. Several approaches to training will be considered, including demonstrations and workshops that provide hands-on opportunities.

Training will occur prior to the system's implementation. Training is a high priority and should occur as soon as possible. Along with training, employees should have individual reference materials to assist with the implementation processes. Early training and reference materials should provide confidence and comfort in the system.

Specific training aids, demonstrations, and materials will be customized based on the selected solution and may consist of training schedules, presentations, system overview, and hands-on training and support.

5.3 Identify Feed-Back Mechanisms

A variety of communications vehicles should be considered to receive feedback from employees. Some communications vehicles to consider are as follows:

- Newsletters such as Inside SFA and InStep
- Email announcements
- Posters
- Presentations, and question-and-answer sessions
- Fact sheets
- Job aids

- Staff meetings
- Suggestion boxes
- Focus groups

5.4 Key Factors In Implementing And Using An RMS

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) cites several key factors that need to be consider when implementing and using an RMS. These factors include the following key points:

Senior Managers—Senior management must understand and support the move to electronic record keeping and the associated changes in the business process. Senior management needs to understand, support, and respond to the high level legislative, administrative, and departmental direction to implement an electronic government, as well as the business case for an RMS.

Agency Staff—An RMS needs to be implemented in agencies so that the resulting changes in work processes are practical and make sense to agency staff. For example, an RMS implementation may require agency staff to index and classify records at the time of creation. Depending on how this is introduced and integrated into current work processes, this task could be viewed as either an overwhelming burden or a reasonable duty.

Information Systems/Information Technology [IS/IT] Staff—RMS requirements must be presented to the organization's IS/IT staff, so it is clear that the requirements go beyond end user needs. RMS requirements also must meet the legal and policy burdens placed upon an organization. Record management must become a central component to the design of automated information systems. The business case for a well-implemented RMS, including how it meets the standards of the GPRA, must be expressed in ways that make sense to the IS/IT staff.

Records Officers/Managers—Records officers/managers must understand RMS issues well enough to persuasively articulate the records management requirements for electronic records to a number of different audiences including the IS/IT staff. By doing so, records managers will be recognized as having a significant role in the development of electronic information systems (EIS) that create and/or manage the organization's records. Records managers need to be the legitimate source of records management requirements and take an active role in the development of the RMS.

Reengineering—Before implementing an RMS, the organization should take the time and effort to reengineer both their business and record keeping processes to take full advantage of the efficiencies that an RMS can provide over paper-based systems, and integrate the RMS into the redesign of business processes and mission-supporting information systems.

Piloting—Depending on the architectural design of the RMS system, whether or not it uses a COTS product, and the ultimate scope of implementation, all RMS projects benefit greatly from the use of pilot projects. This is in large part due to the way in which pilot programs elicit the human factors issues associated with the move to an electronic record-keeping environment.

Education—Educating the organization's senior management, program staff, IS/IT managers, records managers, and others (such as the organization's legal staff) to understand the roles and responsibilities they need to undertake, is critical to the successful implementation of any RMS.

Training—While the implementation of an RMS would ideally be transparent to the record creator, given the current state of RMS technology, this is never the case. As such, it is critical that any move toward an RMS is accompanied by sufficient end-user training to enable records creators, records users, and records managers to both understand and feel comfortable with the technology.

Policy and Standards Development/Implementation—Standards to ensure the capture and retention of electronic records in an RMS must be developed and implemented. Policies and procedures for the development and use of an RMS are needed. This includes addressing the migration of records during their retention period in response to changes to system equipment, software, media, and document standards.

Technical—RMS standards must be defined or adopted to support multi-vendor solutions that are enterprise-wide, scalable, and feasible for organizations to implement and maintain.

5.5 Road Map From Here To There

Like any system implementation, an RMS can be a smooth transition from a paper-intensive environment to a paperless environment, or it can be a total failure. The key step in obtaining an appropriate RMS system at the beginning stage of development is to identify business and system requirements (such as client server-based or web-based requirements).

The methodology used to implement a document system/records system must start with the definition of system requirements. This is achieved by conducting process analysis and mapping to identify issues in document management. This stage identifies the existing document processes and their relationships with other administrative processes. Detailed mapping of the document process and RMS system specifications are created. The existing document process may be further reengineered before the RMS implementation.

Other steps in the development process include the following high level activities:

- Recommendations and a decision will be made for the selection of an RMS solution and the development of the selected RMS solution will be completed.
- The RMS system will be implemented and tested first within the office of the SFA CFO.
- Once the RMS system will be implemented, tested, and accepted by the CFO, the RMS solution will be implemented throughout the remainder of the SFA HQ.

Other activities associated with the implementation of the RMS system are as follows:

- Offsite visits to other organization with an RMS to learn about the best-in-business RMS applications from similar businesses.
- Development of an organizational communications plan to educate employees on the RMS and its impact on their business processes and job performance. The goal is to build trust in the system and change culture.
- Live demonstrations of various RMSs.
- Employee training.

6. IDENTIFICATION OF END USERS AFFECTED BY THE RMS SOLUTION

6.1 End-User Profiles

End-user profiles will be developed after the completion of the Requirements Definition phase.

6.1.1 Who Are Affected

All SFA employees will be affected (managers and front-line employees) by an RMS system. Access to the system by field office employees will be addressed at a future date.

The following employee issues will be addressed in a future version of this document.

- How will business processes be affected (if at all)?
- What needs to be performed differently?
- What will continue to be the same?
- What's in it for me?
- How will the RMS solution apply to the everyday workload?

6.1.2 What Type Of Users Will Interact With The System

This section will be addressed after the completion of the Requirements Definition phase.

7. COMMUNICATION PLANNING BY DEVLOPMENT PHASE

Effective and timely communication is vital to the successful implementation of an RMS solution at the SFA. The communication process occurs in all levels of the organization and involves various media, tools, and strategies. For this process to be truly effective, the following actions need to occur:

- Senior managers need to coordinate communication activities with middle management.
- Senior managers need to communicate planning intent to middle management and employees.

- Middle management needs to play the role of communication facilitator between senior management and employees.
- Employees need to have opportunities to provide feedback to both senior and middle management.

Many government agencies and private organizations have undertaken the move toward an RMS to solve their paper management challenges. One key to managing a change such as a move to an RMS is the effective use of communication tools. When used properly, communication tools can ease employee anxiety about change, help facilitate logistics and training, and pave the way for the smooth implementation of an RMS.

EDS reviewed the communication practices of several government agencies that have been successful in implementing an RMS. These agencies were in various stages of RMS implementation and constitute a cross section of public sector services. One component of their implementation strategy is effective, timely communication to their employees.

While we cannot know the exact impact each method of communication had on the implementation, we did recognize several communication patterns or practices that we believe contributed toward the goal of a successful RMS. The following are highlights of communication practices that we believe have helped smooth the way for the effective implementation of an RMS.

- There appeared to be an extensive use of the intranet/internet to communicate information. Many agencies have links or tabs on their web sites dedicated solely to the RMS. These sites are loaded with frequently asked questions (FAQs) and link to useful documents on the RMS, both within the agency and outside the agency. The advantage is any employee within the agency has information at their fingertips to help them better understand their roles and responsibilities with respect to records management. The disadvantage affects employees who do not have access to the intra/internet.
- The use of email in communicating with general or targeted audiences seems to be the preferred method of direct communication. This practice allows for the rapid dissemination of current information and allows for direct feedback from email recipients. While this method of communication is superior, there are some drawbacks. Too many emails on a subject, or ambiguous messages, dilute the effectiveness of email. Also, feedback from employees should be managed in a fair and efficient way.
- Surveys can also play a role in disseminating and gathering information about the RMS. This communication tool is highly effective in gaining insight on employee opinions, requirements, and concerns. The surveys are usually web-based and involve relatively little time to complete and analyze. Drawbacks to this form of communication occur when surveys are poorly designed or an inappropriate audience is selected. Either one of these scenarios can lead to inaccurate survey results.

- For specifically targeted audiences, the use of focus groups and briefings seem to be a useful way to help communicate RMS-related information. This approach allows for two-way communication in a direct and personal environment. Dynamic interaction that is encouraged by an experienced facilitator ensures quality information within focus groups and briefings.
- Vendor demonstrations are also used to make a direct connection with the management/employee and the product they will be using. This hands-on, visual demonstration helps promote better understanding of the product or system.
- The use of training classes to help demonstrate correct use of an RMS is critical to employee understanding of the system. Training events should be scheduled early and communicated to employees prior to the event.
- Periodicals such as newsletters help place the RMS conversion into the mainstream and give the project credence. If a project affects a large number of employees and/or is a departure from prior work practices, it should have a "permanent" place in the periodical. This will allow consistent exposure of the project and will keep employees updated on important events and changes.
- The use of intra-office memoranda helps give the project authority and impetus. Executives and senior level managers should use this tool to help communicate the importance of the RMS to an organization.
- All communication should be in synchronization with the appropriate project schedule. This will help the communication teams to develop dynamic products that mirror the development/deployment of the RMS.
- The use of graphics such as timelines, posters, and other media displays the project in the public eye. High employee traffic areas are excellent venues for this form of communication. These graphics should be colorful and have meaning.

The remainder of this section identifies key communication products or actions that need to occur during the various phases of the development of the RMS solution. (See Appendix B, Overview of SFA Communication Products, for an overview of key communication products that are associated by phase.) Other subproducts and actions will be needed to support these key items. The following sections includes an initial list of products and actions that are designed to serve as guidance for further development of a more robust communication plan at a later date. (See Appendix C, SFA Communication Products, for a detailed view of communication products and actions by planning phase.) The further development of this communications plan is dependent on the RMS solution selected and various other management decisions and inputs. Once decisions and inputs are available, those decisions/inputs should be incorporated into the next version of the Organizational Communication Plan for the SFA.

7.1 Phase 1—Planning

The SFA sponsor of the RMS solution needs to communicate to all stakeholders the level of commitment required to successfully implement an RMS solution at SFA. The desired end result of this communication message is the formal buy-in of an RMS solution by the entire SFA organization.

SFA senior and middle management needs to organize, develop, refine, and formalize the organization's communications plan. The plan should address the following points:

- Develop a clear, concise message from management to employees concerning the pending change.
- Identify internal and external target audiences.
- Identify and develop vehicles to communicate messages from management to employees.
- Plan internal and external communication dates to continue the communication dialogue.
- Identify, develop, and provide feedback mechanisms for employees to communicate their concerns.
- Provide opportunities for two-way communications concerning significant issues.

7.2 Phase 2—Requirements

The Requirements phase includes gathering the requirements for the system, determining/selecting an RMS solution from a list of alternatives, and designing the selected RMS solution. Communication products are discussed for each of these stages.

Requirements

Management needs to notify end users about the proposed scanning operation and alert them to what is expected of them so they can adequately prepare.

Communication vehicles and feedback mechanisms need to be established and used to notify the organization of the existence of these communication tools.

Management needs to develop and deliver the following:

- Provide notification to affected employees of requirements gathering efforts and its importance to developing a successful RMS solution.
- Provide sample questions employees will be asked so they can appropriately prepare.
- Provide opportunities for employees to ask questions and give feedback.
- Provide assistance in setting up meetings.
- Provide an overall development plan to employees.

Alternatives

Senior and middle management need to provide notification to employees about the selected RMS alternative. This notification should include the following points:

- Notification and description of the selected RMS alternative.
- Why/how the decision was made.
- How it will affect employees.
- Who has to prepare for change and when.
- How the change will affect employees.
- How the SFA will facilitate the change.

Management needs to publish the proposed development schedule. They also need to provide information about the implementation plan and prepare to communicate it to the organization.

Design

During the design stage of the project, the following communication items should be addressed:

- Identify and notify candidates for training.
- Advise employees on how to prepare.
- Brief employees on the progress of the design of the RMS solution.
- Provide/publish dates of testing and implementation within the CFO and the remainder of SFA.
- Publish deployment and implementation schedules.

7.3 Document and Record Preparation

One of the more critical tasks in implementing an electronic RMS is the conversion of the organization's back files. The conversion process is usually outsourced to an outside vendor who has the equipment, expertise, and facilities to efficiently scan and store digital images in an RMS repository. To make this process most efficient and to cause the least disruption to the organization's business process, the back files must be sufficiently prepared prior to the actual scanning of the documents. This will involve close coordination between the organization and the vendor (as of this version, a vendor has not been selected). The organization should communicate several messages to employees who will be affected by the conversion process. A list of potential messages is as follows:

- A clear, concise definition of what constitutes a back file should be communicated to employees. This will help employees separate back files from files that will not be scanned or will be scanned at a later time. Included in this definition should be an inclusive set of dates to help determine back file time periods.
- The conversion time frame should be published/posted in a public location. A clear start date and end date for the conversion should be identified for each organization that is affected by the conversion. An intranet location is an excellent place to post this information.

- The overall conversion process should be clearly stated and depicted so each organization understands how the conversion process will flow. Each organization should be able to see how they fit into the process. A colorful visual posted on the intranet site or other public domain will help inform employees.
- Organizations affected by the conversion process should have accessibility to the conversion methodology used by the vendor. Access to this methodology will help organizations better prepare back files for the scanning process. In general, back files should be organized by type, chronology, alphabetically, or case file. Documents should be boxed and labeled by organization.

Several modes of communication can be used to communicate messages about the conversion process. Some examples are as follows:

- Announcements at communication IPT and subgroup meetings.
- Memoranda from executive and management-level staff to employees via email.
- The use of feature articles and "permanent" items of interest in organizational newsletters to keep the conversion in the public eye.
- Emails to all employees to help communicate specific messages.
- Targeted emails to members of the organization directly affected by the conversion.
- Posting of an FAQ site on the organization's intranet.
- Flyers and other descriptive media describing the conversion process posted in high traffic employee venues (NARA has some posters and media that can be used.)

7.4 Phase 4—Development and Testing

Senior managers need to discuss the overall RMS development progress with middle management and jointly prepare appropriate communication messages and vehicles. Management needs to brief employees on the RMS development progress to include the following:

- Publish revised training plan and schedules.
- Publish deployment schedule.

7.5 Phase 5—Deployment Within CFO

In the Deployment within CFO phase, management needs to communicate the status of the implementation to include the following:

- Publish revisions to deployment/implementation schedules and training plan.
- Publish successes and lessons learned.
- Gather feedback from CFO employees.
- Publish remaining deployment, training, and implementation schedules.

7.6 Phase 6—Deployment Within Remaining SFA HQ

During the Deployment with the Remaining SFA HQ phase, the following communications items should be addressed:

- Gather feedback.
- Publish successes and lessons learned.
- Publish overall status of the implementation.

7.7 Phase 7—Implement System Improvements

In the final phase of the project, the following communication items should be addressed:

- Gather/provide input to the system implementation report and training report.
- Provide overall status of the project.
- Gather final implementation feedback.
- Publish lessons learned.
- Plan follow-on communication strategy.

Appendix A—Acronyms

CFO	Chief Financial Officer
COTS	commercial off-the-shelf
DOEd	Department of Education
EDM	electronic document management
EIS	electronic information systems
ERK	electronic record keeping
FAQ	frequently asked questions
GM	general manager
GPRA	Government Performance Results Act
HQ	headquarters
IPT	Integrated Project Team
IS/IT	information systems/information technology
IT	information technology
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration
NPR	National Performance Review
RMA	record management application
RMS	record management system
SFA	Student Financial Assistance

APPENDIX B——OVERVIEW OF COMMUNICATION PRODUCTS

APPENDIX C—SFA COMMUNICATION PRODUCTS